

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSG #1392/01 2362006
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 242006Z AUG 07
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2039
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF EDUCATION WASHDC
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1798
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3783
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0479
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG LIMA 5216
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1746

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 001392

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STATE FOR ECA DAS THOMAS FARRELL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [SCUL](#) [SOCI](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: SECRETARY SPELLINGS AND CHILEAN EDUCATION MINISTER LOOK TO INCREASE EXCHANGES AND PARTNERSHIPS

REF: SANTIAGO 1383

1. SUMMARY: Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings and State Department DAS for Academic Programs Thomas Farrell discussed the new U.S.-Chile Equal Opportunities Scholarship Program with Education Minister Yasna Provoste, encouraging the GOC to widely publicize it to talented Chilean candidates for graduate study. Secretary Spellings also urged Chileans to think broadly about diverse offerings at a wide range of U.S. institutions. Provoste emphasized the importance of this program to Chile. It complements the Bachelet administration's objective of making education accessible to all strata of Chilean society. University of Chile President Victor Perez said Chile would welcome U.S. experts in education to visit Chile to help with pedagogical instruction and reform the country's educational system. Provoste supported this suggestion, and hopes to expand the current scholarship program. Secretary Spellings welcomed the new partnership and urged the quick implementation of the agreement. End Summary.

2. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Academic Programs Thomas Farrell and a

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delegation of eight U.S. university presidents and chancellors met with Minister of Education Yasna Provoste on August 20. They discussed the broad higher education agenda and reviewed the Equal Opportunities Scholarship Program, including future plans. Minister Provoste was accompanied by Education Ministry International Affairs Chief Rodrigo Valenzuela, Deputy Director of the Foreign Ministry's Office of North American Affairs Mauricio Ugalde, Education Ministry Head of Curriculum and Evaluations Pedro Montt, Education Ministry Director of the English Opens Doors Program Rodrigo Fabrega, Open Doors International Relations Coordinator Carmen Oria, Education Ministry Director of Higher Education Julio Castro, and Victor Perez, the President of the University of Chile and Vice President of the Council of University Rectors (comprised of 25 traditional universities).

3. Minister Provoste expressed her sincere appreciation for the new bilateral scholarship program, which will enable up to 100 Chileans per year to pursue advanced graduate studies at universities in the United States. She welcomed the English-training component, which will make it possible to remove language as a barrier to highly-talented Chilean candidates wishing to study in the United States. Provoste emphasized that equal opportunity and access to education are top priorities of the Bachelet administration, and this joint program fits in well with the GOC agenda.

4. Secretary Spellings noted that Chile and the United States have

much in common, including a shared goal of closing the achievement gap ("no child left behind"), which is vital to the vibrancy of our countries and knowledge-based economies. The USG and U.S. universities are eager to work with Chile to receive its very best students and to encourage U.S. students to study in Chile. The Secretary highlighted the rich diversity of U.S. higher education.

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She urged the GOC to widely publicize the opportunities offered in this scholarship program and to encourage Chileans to think broadly about the wide range of U.S. institutions and their individual specialties.

15. University of Chile President Victor Perez emphasized that the two countries should focus not only on Ph.Ds in science and technology, but also include scholarships in the humanities and education. Developing countries such as Chile need a critical mass of educators who can improve the system. Perez noted that German teachers came to Chile in the late 1800s and overhauled Chile's educational system. He suggested something similar as a "bridge" in the short-term, between now and when the first Chilean Ph.D students return to Chile after their years in the United States. The United States could instead send its own recent Ph.Ds in education to train Chilean educators in instructional methodology, evaluation, curriculum reform, and other pedagogical areas.

16. DAS Farrell agreed on the importance of the humanities and social sciences, which promote respect for the rule of law in a democratic society. Secretary Spellings seconded the point on the need to expand cooperation beyond science and technology. She indicated the USG would focus on quickly establishing the current agreement, building the numbers of students and adding capacity. The Secretary encouraged Minister Provoste to visit U.S. institutions and Washington to spread the good news about the program.

17. University of California, Santa Barbara Chancellor Henry Yang

noted there is already considerable cooperation between U.S. and Chilean universities as, for example, in the construction of what is expected to be the world's largest telescope in Chile. He emphasized that trips of this kind help solidify ties between learning institutions. Yang praised the University of Chile for its visible and active role in the Pacific Rim Association of 33 universities, which includes UC Santa Barbara and 10 other West Coast universities.

18. In a private meeting with Secretary Spellings, Minister Provoste urged that a similar scholarship program be developed for talented Chilean students attending a network of more than 100 technical and vocation institutions. While expressing interest in the idea, Secretary Spellings emphasized the need to get the first phase of

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the new program up and running.

19. Department of Education and ECA cleared this message.

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